



July 2014

A monthly e-newsletter by NUH GP Liaison Centre

Specialists in Focus



Dr Asim Shabbir

*MBBS (PAK), MMed (Singapore),
FRCS (Edin)*

*Consultant, Division of General
Surgery, University Surgical Cluster*

Dr Asim Shabbir graduated in 1996. He obtained his postgraduate qualification from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh in 2007. He did his advanced training in Gastric Cancer at the Department of Upper Gastrointestinal Surgery, Seoul National University Bundang, Korea followed by that in Obesity & Metabolic Surgery at Eda Hospital Kaoshiung, Taiwan.

Dr Asim's special interests are in surgery for obesity and metabolic diseases. He is also interested in approaches for early and advanced gastric cancer, as well as minimally invasive upper GI surgeries like reflux and achalasia cardia.

Apart from his role as Deputy Director of the Minimally Invasive Surgical Centre of NUH, he is currently the Post Graduate Director of the NUH's Department of Surgery. He is also the President-Elect of the Obesity and Metabolic Surgery Society of Singapore (OMSSS).

Clinical Updates

There have been significant advances in upper gastrointestinal surgery and we have been in the forefront of bringing them for the benefit of our patients.

Bariatric and metabolic surgery

Morbidly obese patients with metabolic syndrome have benefited tremendously from these interventions. The Swedish obese subjects study reported 10-year diabetes remission rates to be more frequent with surgery, and the 17.6-year follow-up diabetes-related complications to be fewer than the non-surgical care. Thus, surgery seems to add healthy years to one's life with a delay in onset of complications should the disease persists.

Newer procedures like laparoscopic sleeve with loop bypass add to the available choices with the hope of better outcomes.

Robotic bariatric surgery

Metabolic surgery is technically challenging. The introduction of laparoscopic surgery spared many patients of the complications related to open surgery. However, today, the procedure is made more precise and safe with the incorporation of robotic surgery into the current practice, thus safer for the patients.

Minimal access gastric cancer surgery

The morbidity associated with open wounds is not surprising. For patients with early gastric cancer, laparoscopic gastrectomy is a globally accepted approach with similar outcomes to open surgery. The procedure allows patients to recover faster with less early phase morbidity and greater patient satisfaction.

A transgastric approach to gastrointestinal tumours of the stomach is a new concept. In cases where lesions are largely endoluminal and their excision would result in loss of greater part of the stomach or function, this approach offers hope of organ structure and function preservation.



GP Liaison Centre (GPLC)

Mr Davin Wangsa or Ms Zanda Chiang

Email: gp@nuhs.edu.sg

Specialists in Focus



Dr Ngiam Kee Yuan

MBBS (London), MRCS (Glasgow),
Mmed (Surgery), FRCS (Edinburgh)

Consultant, Division of Thyroid &
Endocrine Surgery, University
Surgical Cluster

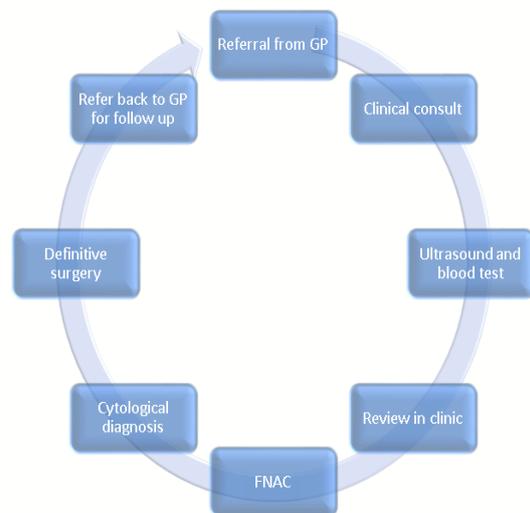
Dr Ngiam Kee Yuan is a Consultant at the Division of Thyroid and Endocrine Surgery at the National University Hospital, Singapore. He completed his basic and advanced surgical training at Alexandra Hospital, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, National University Hospital and Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, Singapore. He was awarded a fellowship from the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and was accredited as a surgical specialist by the Specialist Accreditation Board, Singapore in 2012. He received the Higher Manpower Development Program Award in 2012 to complete a Fellowship in Metabolic Surgery.

Dr Ngiam's specialty is in general surgery, and his special interests are endocrine and thyroid surgery, bariatric & metabolic surgery as well as advanced endoscopy and laparoscopic surgeries. He was awarded the ExxonMobil-NUS Research Fellowship for Clinicians in 2007 and his research interests include minimally invasive thyroid surgery, parathyroid surgery, obesity & surgery for type 2 diabetes.

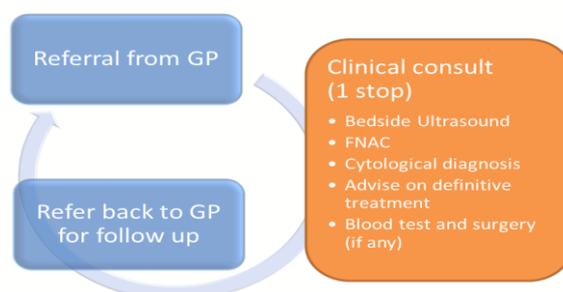
Clinical Updates

One-stop thyroid nodule diagnosis clinic and endoscopic thyroidectomy

- Thyroid nodules are common and often detected incidentally during a physical exam, or by the person noticing a seemingly abnormal lump in his or her neck (2-6%).
- Diagnosis requires physical examination, ultrasound and fine needle aspiration cytology (FNAC) for definitive diagnosis (with a 10% chance of malignancy).
- Traditionally, the workup for thyroid nodule can be time consuming and can take up to one month.



With a new one-stop thyroid nodule diagnosis service, this diagnostic process can be reduced to ONE day.





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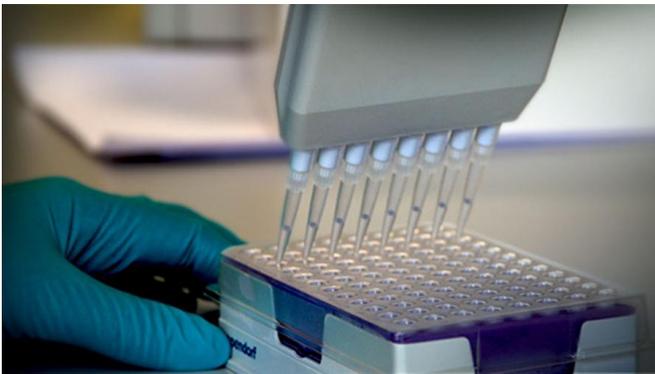
Mr Davin Wangsa or Ms Zanda Chiang

Email: gp@nuhs.edu.sg

Happenings @ NUH

Quick test to detect gene mutation enables patients with late stage lung cancer to have early access to treatment

The National University Hospital (NUH) now offers a rapid screening test to detect mutations in epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) in late stage lung cancer.



This allows doctors to customise therapy treatment for patients diagnosed with the condition, and commence treatment earlier.

In healthy people, the EGFR, which is a protein found on the surface of cells, allows the cells to grow and divide. In cancer, the genes mutate, leading to cells growing and dividing uncontrollably. It is estimated that 50% of non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), which makes up 85-90% of all lung cancers, is linked to mutations of the EGFR. This particular type of cancer has been found to be relatively resistant to chemotherapy.

According to the Singapore Cancer Registry Interim Report, some 6,407 cases of lung cancer were diagnosed between 2008 and 2012. It ranks as the top killer cancer in Singapore, with 5,524 deaths reported in the same period, and the second most common cancer in males and third most common cancer in females.

With the new test, doctors are now able to rapidly detect the presence of mutations in the EGFR gene in NSCLC, and customise treatment for individual patients based on their results.

“With a rapid diagnosis of the EGFR gene mutation, oncologists are able to make an informed decision in their selection of a suitable therapy for advanced stage NSCLC patients,” says Dr Brendan Pang (Consultant, Department of Pathology, NUH).

Test results are available within one to two working days, as compared to the current three to five working days using traditional methods like direct sequencing.

Heart failure hits patients 10 years earlier

HEART failure is more likely to hit people in Singapore at a much younger age than those in the West, a study has found.

This is also true of most people in the region: Experts found that the average age of heart failure in 11 places in Asia is 60, compared with 70 in Europe and 72 in the United States.

Heart failure does not mean the heart has stopped working, but that its pumping power is weaker than normal.

Asians have heart failure at a younger age because they tend to be more prone to diseases like diabetes, say doctors.

Click [here](#) to read more about heart failure.

Upcoming GP CME Events

Date	Topic
16 August	NUH GP ENT CME 2014

Please note that all CME events will be held at the **Seminar Room T1-01** unless otherwise stated.

**NUHS Tower Block, Level 1
1E Kent Ridge Road,
Singapore 119228.**

Please **CALL** us @ **6772 5695 / 5079**
for registration & enquiries